TO THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND MEMBERS OF THE WISBECH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Gentlemen,

The Annual Report for the Town of Wisbech which I again have the pleasure of submitting to you, for the past Twelve Months, ending December 31st 1909, is, taken as a whole, of a satisfactory character; as although there have been a larger number of infectious diseases notified to me, in consequence of both the diseases of Measles and Chicken Pox being now notifiable, still the more serious Zymotic Diseases have not been much more prevalent than during the previous years, and it is very gratifying to find that only 6 deaths were caused by these diseases, 2 in the Town and 4 in the Infectious Diseases Hospital, although this is a larger number than in the previous year.

The chief infectious disease has again been Scarlet Fever, there were 55 cases reported to me, the cases generally were not of a severe type, and were spread over all parts of the Town. You will remember that in the Summer, I wrote you a Special Report in reference to this disease, in consequence of your attention having been drawn to the inadequate accommodation at the Isolation Hospital; unfortunately, the Hospital did become over-crowded at this time, chiefly due to the large number of cases being brought there from the surrounding country, and also due to the protracted length of the convalescent stages of this disease.

After writing you this report, the disease slowly began to show signs of abatement, and towards the close of the year, had practically disappeared. The enormous value of the great precautions which were taken in the use of disinfectants and isolation of these cases cannot be overestimated, and it was entirely due to the care bestowed that we were saved a much more serious epidemic than we did experience.

Diphtheria, which is always a serious illness, and one which requires very promptly dealing with, appeared in 20 cases spread over the whole year, and in isolated parts of the District; at no time did it become serious, and in consequence of our being able to deal with it, so much more effectively now with Antitoxic treatment, it is exceedingly gratifying to note, that not one

death was recorded as due to this disease in the Town, and but three in the Isolation Hospital.

Measles this year has fortunately not given us much trouble, there were in all 15 cases notified, the larger number of these occuring in quite the latter part of the year, and being situated in the Rings End part of the Town, the character of the disease was of a mild type. The absence of this disease is particularly gratifying, as you will remember that in both the previous years, this illness became very prevalent and caused considerable anxiety.

Erysipelas again has not been very prevalent, there were 14 cases notified, the cases were all of a mild type, and no death was attributable to this disease.

Influenza, which in previous years has been so wide spread and severe, this year although being prevalent to a considerable extent, in the early three months, did not cause the same amount of discomfort as formerly, there were two deaths directly attributable to this disease.

In every case of infectious illness, which has come under my notice, we have endeavoured to prevent the spread of the disease by a most liberal supply of disinfectants being made and no trouble has been spared in endeavouring to obtain the best Disinfection and isolation possible, and in the removing of cases to the Infectious Hospital whenever possible.

I have very frequently visited all parts of the Town and found that the Town during the past twelve months has been kept in a very healthy and cleanly condition, the Sanitary requirements have been well looked after and again special attention has been given to the conditions of the various Cowsheds, Milkshops, Slaughter houses etc all of which have continued being kept in a much better condition than formerly.

Now that there are several factories springing up in the District, it has become necessary to give these our special attention I am glad to be able to report that the sanitary requirements at these various Workshops and buildings are satisfactory and adequate accommodation has been provided for the Workpeople employed in these places. When I have visited these, I have been

satisfied with the general way in which they have been looked after.

The drainage of the Town, taken as a whole, has been satisfactory both the large and smaller drains have worked fairly well, but I cannot too strongly recommend the frequent and consistent flushing of these, which, especially in the warm months of the year, proves of such great benefit to them, and is the means of allaying many of the nuisances which must otherwise arise at times.

I note with satisfaction that you contemplate extensive improvements with the large main sewer shortly, and doubtless this, when done, will very largely assist in keeping the sewers in a better condition. May I now suggest to you the advisibility of extending the Town sewerage system to the new parts of the Town which are rapidly being well populated, and are causing me considerable anxiety, through the prevalence, too frequently, of Zymotic diseases in these new houses; Districts of Mount Pleasant Bank, Marham Terrace and Great Worlds End are without sewers and greatly need them. This year we have again been remarkably free from Typhoid Fever, obviously due to the inhabitants drinking only the Marham Water, which is rapidly becoming practically the only supply of the Town, the quantity of water used is now very considerable and the supply has been very adequate.

I note with satisfaction that considerable improvement, in some of the streets, has been made. Now that the repaving has been completed they are in a better sanitary condition and give a much more cleanly appearance to those parts of the Town.

I have now to note that the number of cases of Phthisis, amongst the poorer inhabitants, was 9, which was notified to me during the year, of these 3 were located in the Town and 6 in the Workhouse. Special care has been bestowed upon these cases.

The number of Births during the year was 205, compared with 240 in the previous year, of these 103 were Males and 102 females, giving a Birthrate of 20.2 per 1000, this being a rather smaller rate than that of last year.

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The number of deaths that was registered during the year was 129, this is a very small number when compared with the last 10 years and is the smallest number recorded during this period, this number gives a death rate of 12.8 per 1000, which obviously shows the very healthy condition of the District. As well as these there were 38 deaths in the Workhouse, 10 in the Hospital and 3 in the Fever Hospital, collectively making a much smaller number than usual.

Amongst infant children there were 19 deaths which gives an infantile death rate of 92.6 per 1000 of the Births registered, whilst the deaths amongst the aged again show a large proportion. The deaths from diseases of the respiratory organs were from Pneumonia 4, Phthisis 7 and Bronchitis 6, whilst Heart affections caused 10, Accidents 5 and Cancerous diseases 11 deaths.

Herewith I beg to hand you the tabular statements of Births, Sickness, Mortality for this period together with records of previous years for comparison.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Very faithfully yours,

Harry Groom. M.D.

Medical Officer of Health.